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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating a buyer's selection of a vendor via automated comparison of records and bidding by vendors of customized goods or services via a computer operated system, comprising steps of:

prior to receiving job data from a buyer pertaining to a job for which the buyer seeks a vendor, receiving electronic communications from a plurality of vendors, the electronic communications being used in establishing a plurality of vendor records which are stored in into an electronic memory associated with the a computer system, the vendor records corresponding to each of a plurality of vendors and having vendor capability data identifying a plurality of capabilities for said vendor to provide a customized good or service;

each buyer using the system generating an electronic communication providing information identifying a plurality of vendors for inclusion in a pool of vendors associated with said buyer to potentially receive a job solicitation, wherein the system stores electronic data sufficient to identify every vendor pool and its association being associated with a corresponding buyer based upon the buyer transmitted vendor pool identification information which occurs prior to analysis of any job data pertaining to a job for which bids are sought by or on behalf of the buyer;

receiving an electronic communication defining a job data from or on behalf of at least one buyer, after said buyer's vendor pool is determined, said job data including a job

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descriptor data which specifies a plurality of characteristics of said customized good or service for which said buyer wishes a ~~price quote or~~ bid;

automatically comparing via a computer processor said vendor records to said job data, wherein said comparing includes comparing said plurality of characteristics for said customized good or service with corresponding plural capabilities for vendors from the pool of vendors associated with said buyer;

automatically identifying via a computer processor at least one subset from the buyer's associated pool of vendors as qualified for receiving the solicitation ~~an invitation for bid~~, based on said comparison;

thereafter ~~selectively~~ transmitting ~~a~~ the solicitation to only selected members from the identified subset of the buyer's associated pool of vendors;

receiving bid response data from at least one of said vendors which received said solicitation, said bid response data identifying each of the vendors from which it was received and a bid price; and

outputting to said buyer an electronic communication providing at least one of said bid response data.

Claims 2.-26. (Canceled)

Please add the following new claims:

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27.   (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein said job data further includes a selection criteria data, said selection criteria specifying at least one of a vendor name, its relevant geographic location, a vendor capability as to product categories, a descriptor of an ownership characteristic for said vendor, a descriptor of a union status of said vendor, and
        wherein said comparison is performed in accordance with said selection criteria data.

28.   (New) A method according to claim 1 further comprising steps of:
        ranking said bid response data according to said represented bid price.

29.   (New) A method according to claim 1 further comprising steps of:
        ranking said bid response data according to price; and
        publishing ranked bid response data.

30.   (New) A method according to claim 1 further comprising steps of:
        ranking said bid response data according to price; and
        publishing information to other vendors identifying a selected vendor and a rank order value of said bid response data.

31.   (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein said vendor capability data represents a vendor's capability to manufacture each of a plurality of different types of customized goods.

32.   (New) A method according to claim 1, further comprising steps of:
        transmitting to said buyer an invoice for payment of said bid subsequent to receiving a job completion data.

33.   (New) A method according to claim 32, further comprising steps of:

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transferring a payment from said buyer into an escrow account serving as a single-source accounts payable destination for the buyer's vendor payments;

transferring a payment from said escrow account to an account of said vendor corresponding to the invoice payment data.

35.   (New) A method according to claim 32, further comprising steps of:
adding a system use fee to the invoice.

36.   (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein a vendor status in the buyer associated vendor pool is not altered as a result of its bid values or failure to bid.

37.   (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein an award is made only to a lowest bidder.

38. (New) A method for facilitating a buyer's selection of a vendor via automated comparison of records and bidding by vendors of customized goods or services via a computer operated system, comprising steps of:

prior to receiving job data from a buyer pertaining to a job for which the buyer seeks a vendor, receiving electronic communications from a plurality of vendors, the electronic communications being used in automatically establishing a plurality of vendor records which are stored in an electronic memory associated with the computer system, the vendor records corresponding to each of a plurality of vendors and having vendor capability data identifying a plurality of capabilities for said vendor to provide a customized good or service;

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each buyer using the system generating an electronic communication providing information identifying a plurality of vendors for inclusion in a pool of vendors associated with said buyer to potentially receive a job solicitation, wherein the system stores electronic data sufficient to identify every vendor pool and its association with a corresponding buyer based upon the buyer transmitted vendor pool identification information which occurs prior to analysis of job data pertaining to a job for which bids are sought by or on behalf of the buyer;

receiving an electronic communication defining a job data from or on behalf of at least one buyer, after said buyer's vendor pool is determined, said job data including a job descriptor data which specifies a plurality of characteristics of said customized good or service for which said buyer wishes a bid;

automatically comparing via a computer processor said vendor records to said job data, wherein said comparing includes comparing said plurality of characteristics for said customized good or service with corresponding plural capabilities for vendors from the pool of vendors associated with said buyer;

automatically identifying via a computer processor at least one subset from the buyer's associated pool of vendors as qualified for receiving the solicitation, based on said comparison;

thereafter automatically transmitting the solicitation to only selected members from the identified subset of the buyer's associated pool of vendors;

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receiving bid response data from at least one of said vendors which received said solicitation, said bid response data identifying each of the vendors from which it was received and a bid price; and

thereafter automatically outputting to said buyer an electronic communication providing at least one of said bid response data.

39. (New) A system for facilitating a buyer's selection of a vendor via automated comparison of records and based upon bidding by vendors of customized goods or services via a computer operated system, comprising:

a means for receiving electronic communications from a plurality of vendors prior to receiving job data from a buyer pertaining to a job for which the buyer seeks a vendor, the electronic communications being used in establishing a plurality of vendor records which are stored in an electronic memory associated with the computer system, the vendor records corresponding to each of a plurality of vendors and having vendor capability data identifying a plurality of capabilities for said vendor to provide a customized good or service;

a means for receiving an electronic communication from any buyer using the system providing information identifying a plurality of vendors for inclusion in a pool of vendors associated with said buyer to potentially receive a job solicitation, wherein the system stores electronic data sufficient to identify every vendor pool and its association with a corresponding buyer based upon the buyer transmitted vendor pool identification information

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which occurs prior to analysis of job data pertaining to a job for which bids are sought by or on behalf of the buyer;

a means for receiving an electronic communication defining a job data from or on behalf of at least one buyer, after said buyer's vendor pool is determined, said job data including a job descriptor data which specifies a plurality of characteristics of said customized good or service for which said buyer wishes a bid;

a means for automatically comparing via a computer processor said vendor records to said job data, wherein said comparing includes comparing said plurality of characteristics for said customized good or service with corresponding plural capabilities for vendors from the pool of vendors associated with said buyer;

a means for automatically identifying via a computer processor at least one subset from the buyer's associated pool of vendors as qualified for receiving the solicitation, based on said comparison;

a means for transmitting the solicitation to only selected members from the identified subset of the buyer's associated pool of vendors;

a means for receiving bid response data from at least one of said vendors which received said solicitation, said bid response data identifying each of the vendors from which it was received and a bid price; and

a means for outputting to said buyer an electronic communication providing at least one of said bid response data.

40.   (New) A system according to claim 39, wherein said job data further includes a selection criteria data, said selection criteria specifying at least one of a vendor name, its

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relevant geographic location, a vendor capability as to product categories, a descriptor of an ownership characteristic for said vendor, a descriptor of a union status of said vendor, and

wherein said comparison is performed in accordance with said selection criteria data.

41.   (New) A system according to claim 39 further comprising a means for ranking said bid response data according to said represented bid price.

42.   (New) A system according to claim 39 further comprising a means for ranking said bid response data according to priceand
publishing ranked bid response data.

43.   (New) A system according to claim 39 further comprising a means for ranking said bid response data according to price and
publishing information to other vendors identifying a selected vendor and a rank order value of said bid response data.

44.   (New) A system according to claim 39, wherein said vendor capability data represents a vendor's capability to manufacture each of a plurality of different types of customized goods.

45.   (New) A system according to claim 39, further comprising a means for transmitting to said buyer an invoice for payment of said bid subsequent to receiving a job completion data.

46.   (New) A system according to claim 45, further comprising a means for transferring a payment from said buyer into an escrow account serving as a single-source accounts payable destination for the buyer's vendor payments; and

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a means for transferring a payment from said escrow account to an account of said vendor corresponding to the invoice payment data.

47.   (New) A system according to claim 45, further comprising a means for adding a system use fee to the invoice.

48.   (New) A system according to claim 39, wherein a vendor status in the buyer associated vendor pool is not altered as a result of its bid values or failure to bid.

49.   (New) A system according to claim 39, wherein an award is made only to a lowest bidder.

50. (New) A system for facilitating a buyer's selection of a vendor via automated comparison of records and based upon bidding by vendors of customized goods or services via a computer operated system, comprising:

a means for receiving electronic communications from a plurality of vendors prior to receiving job data from a buyer pertaining to a job for which the buyer seeks a vendor, the electronic communications being used in automatically establishing a plurality of vendor records which are stored in an electronic memory associated with the computer system, the vendor records corresponding to each of a plurality of vendors and having vendor capability data identifying a plurality of capabilities for said vendor to provide a customized good or service;

a means for receiving an electronic communication from any buyer using the system providing information identifying a plurality of vendors for inclusion in a pool of vendors

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associated with said buyer to potentially receive a job solicitation, wherein the system stores electronic data sufficient to identify every vendor pool and its association with a corresponding buyer based upon the buyer transmitted vendor pool identification information which occurs prior to analysis of job data pertaining to a job for which bids are sought by or on behalf of the buyer;

a means for receiving an electronic communication defining a job data from or on behalf of at least one buyer, after said buyer's vendor pool is determined, said job data including a job descriptor data which specifies a plurality of characteristics of said customized good or service for which said buyer wishes a bid;

a means for automatically comparing via a computer processor said vendor records to said job data, wherein said comparing includes comparing said plurality of characteristics for said customized good or service with corresponding plural capabilities for vendors from the pool of vendors associated with said buyer;

a means for automatically identifying via a computer processor at least one subset from the buyer's associated pool of vendors as qualified for receiving the solicitation, based on said comparison;

a means for automatically transmitting the solicitation to only selected members from the identified subset of the buyer's associated pool of vendors; and

a means for receiving bid response data from at least one of said vendors which received said solicitation, said bid response data identifying each of the vendors from which it was received and a bid price.

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